eyestorm.com - an Organic case study
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ORGANIC

Who are Organic?

+ Top five global interactive agency
+ Founded in San Francisco, Organic now has 8 offices world-wide
+ Founded in 1993, was one of the original internet design companies
+ Full service offering: ibusiness, Media, Branding, Logistics and Communications

The development diary of a 'dot com'

Week 1 - Locking on to a 'Moving Target'

+ Dot com politics and venture capitalists
+ Financial negotiations

Week 2 - Beginning Discovery

+ Conceptualising the business model
+ Strategic vision
+ Creating the brand blueprint

Week 3 - Plan, Plan, and More Planning

+ The project plan
+ Who is going to do what?
+ What shall we call it?
+ Functionality brainstorm
+ Technology partnerships defined

Week 4 - What Will it Be?

+ Design brief produced
+ Conceptual model developed
+ Still no name decided!

Week 5 - Inventing and Defining

+ "Delve" - a need to redefine visual browsing
+ Creative Requirements
+ Technology platform identified
+ We need a name - now!

The development diary of a 'dot com'

Week 6 - Parallel Paths

+ Name decided at last
+ Creative direction formalised
+ Design concepts developed and reviewed
+ Information architects produce schematics
+ Engineering work begins

Week 7 - Making It Rich

+ Prototyping "Delve" begins
+ Flash elements produced
+ Audio sequences produced
+ Design extended and page templates produced

Week 8 - Putting It Together

+ Media integration starts
+ Database testing

Week 9 - Rushing to the Finish Line

+ Flash optimisation
+ Final design touches
+ Database populated

Week 10 Hands Off!

+ QA and testing
+ Soft launch
+ What happens now?

Week 1 - locking on to a 'moving target'

Dot Com Politics and Venture Capitalists

+ difficult to prioritise needs

+ hard to slow down thinking and be rational

+ multiple visions and opinions

+ not easy to get agreement on vision

Financial Negotiations

+ impossible to forecast costs

+ not much capital to invest upfront

+ no time for paperwork and details!

Week 2 - discovery period begins

Conceptualising the Business Model

+ will it make money?
+ how will we attract users?
+ what is the competitive landscape like?

Strategic Vision

+ to create an inspirational and aesthetically led experience
+ to build an emotional bond with users via community, context and personalisation
+ redefining the online art experience: we're not a gallery
+ "art for everyone" - break down traditional barriers to gallery viewing
+ pleasing the artists, impressing the art critics, and selling art work

The Brand Blueprint

+ held workshop with client to define branding objectives
+ brand mapping exercise to ensure values are expressed via interactivity
+ defines personality and proposition
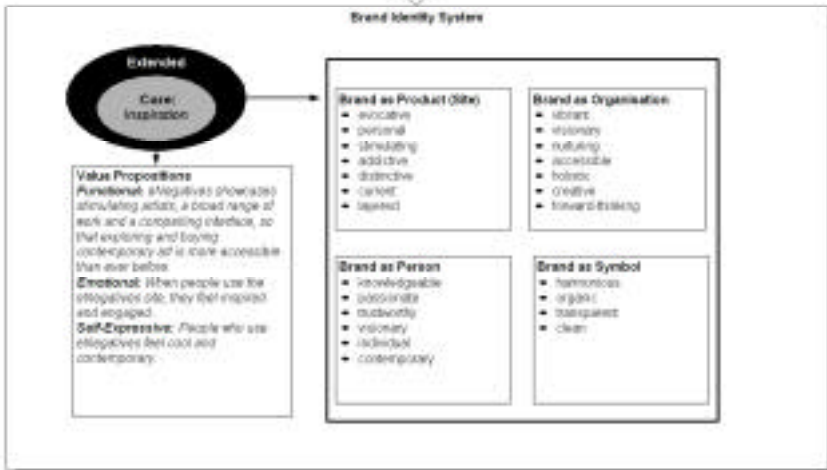
The Brand Map helps to...

+ define target users
+ understand competition
+ express the brand personality
+ definitive statement of intent for brand expression
+ guides all creative work
+ gets client to sign-off!

Week 3 - Plan, Plan, and More Planning!

The project plan

+ essential to keep on schedule
+ lays out milestones and key deliverables

Who is going to do what?

+ define core teams - creative, engineering and strategy
+ identify team members strengths and weaknesses
+ who has the time - other clients are also demanding!

What shall we call it?

+ name is needed before creative work begins
+ problems getting clients to agree direction
+ domain availability limited
+ something original and appropriate to brand

Functionality brainstorm

+ thrash out ideas with all the team
+ the client wants everything! - not enough time
+ prioritise into functionality matrix

Technology partnerships defined

+ how will we get it to work?
+ client identified partner - off the shelf e-commerce via Pandesic
+ training required, staff sent to US for crash course

The Functionality Matrix helps to...

+ list ideas
+ prioritise items
+ identify difficulty with features and importance to brand
+ see the dependencies
+ gets client to sign-off!

Week 4 - What Will it Be?

Design brief produced

+ identify objectives and set scope
+ give team direction and focus

Conceptual models developed

+ clients needs variety of ideas
+ a need to sell in vision
+ no time to 'theorise' too much
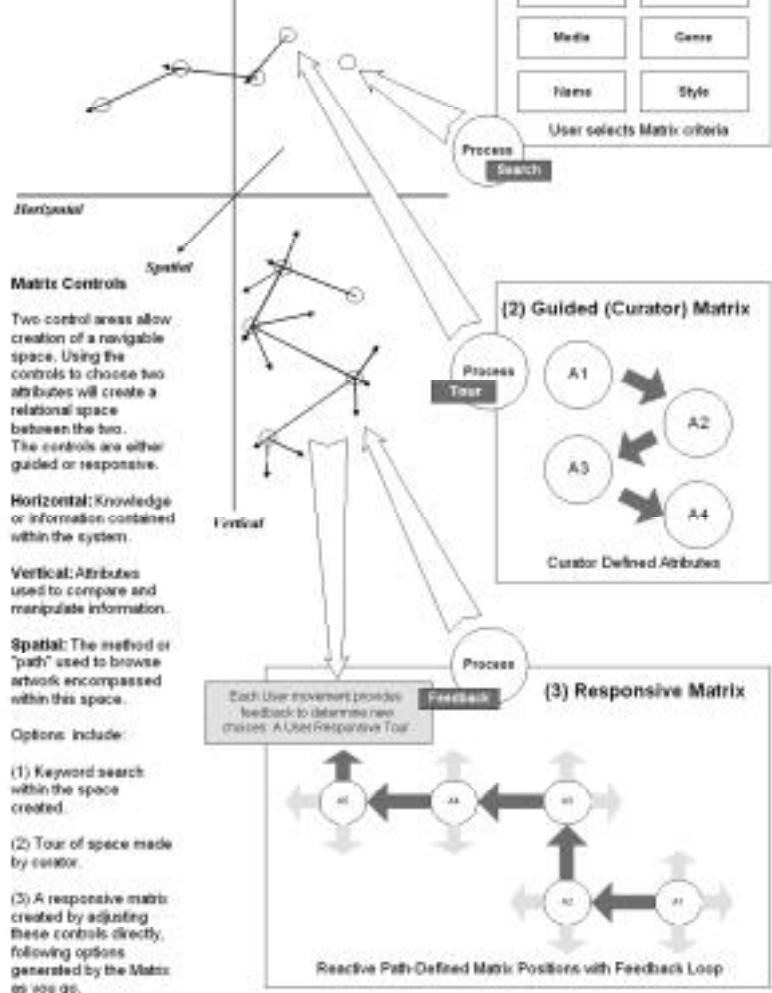+ pressure to give creative ideas focus

Still no name decided!

+ impacting on schedule
+ cannot start design visualisation

The Conceptual Model helps to...

+ shapes the way we think
+ expresses the brand effectively
+ helps us to think laterally about the user experience
+ conveys team vision in an articulate way

Week 5 - Inventing and Defining

"Delve" - a need to redefine visual browsing

+ encapsulation of Conceptual Model
+ addressing the need to provide context for art
+ inventing something 'new'
+ providing wow factor

Creative Requirements

+ final statement of intent
+ full scope covered
+ gets added to Engineering Requirements
+ gets client to sign-off!

We need a name - now!

+ really holding things up
+ client getting twitchy!
+ Our heads hurt - generated over 1000 names by now

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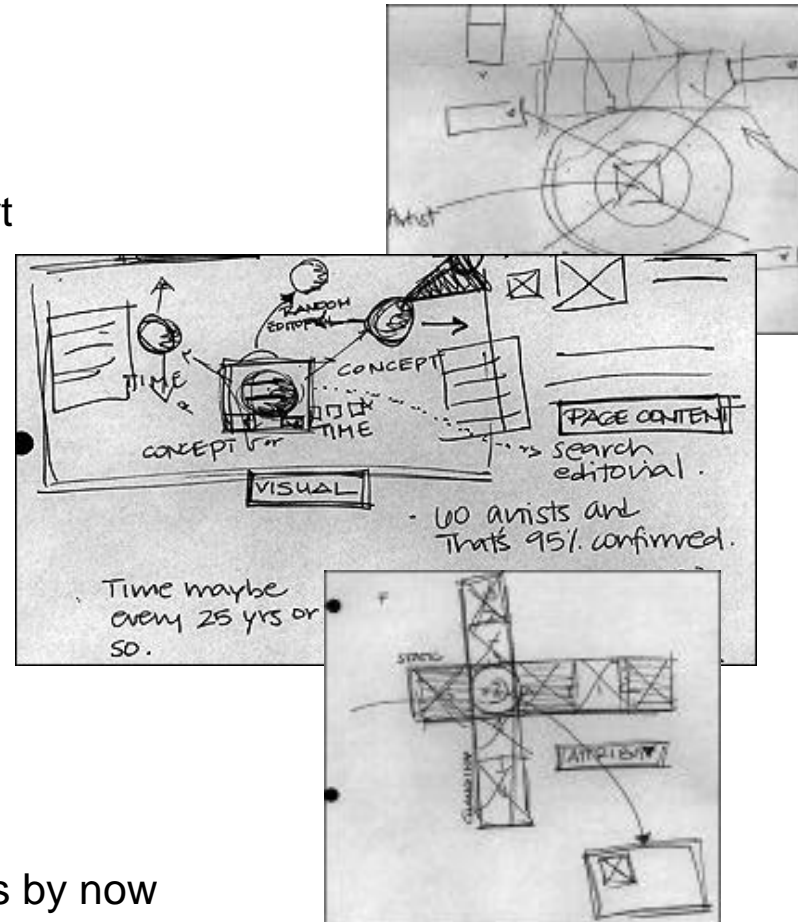
Week 6 - Parallel Paths

Name decided at last

+ need to move forward to catch up on time lost
+ domain name bought - negotiation required
+ legal issues surrounding usage of name

Design concepts developed and reviewed

+ multiple design routes explored and presented to client
+ client has difficulty choosing - wants to start over again!
+ production team cannot progress until design signed off

Information Architects produce site map and schematics

+ hard to get granular when many decisions up in the air
+ engineering dependent on schematics/site map
+ a huge amount of work in a tiny amount of time
+ takes time for client to step through and sign-off
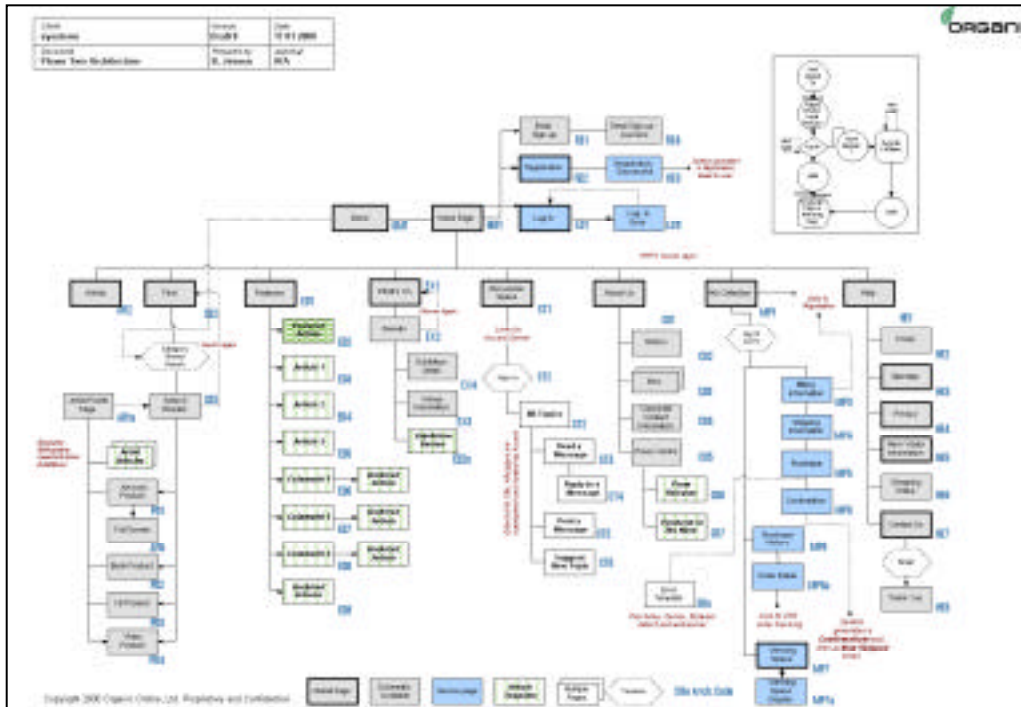
The Site Map helps to...

+   get overview of big picture
+   develop category tree
+   identify content required
+   plan for build
+   detail functional paths and user flow
+   ensure a balance of content
+   get client sign-off!

Schematics help to...

+ organise information independent of look and feel
+ specify functionality
+ prototype the user experience
+ identify each page of site
+ give engineering guidance
+ get client sign-off!

Week 7 - Making It Rich

Prototyping "Delve" begins

+ fear of the unknown - Flash developers express that they have not tried something like this before

+ usability and performance issues start to surface

+ problems when linking to database

Flash elements produced

+ prototype signed off

+ cross-platform nightmares

Audio sequences produced

+ brief and direction needs to be articulate as the freelancer is working remotely

+ has to tie in with visual elements that are still not finalised

+ end up using small chunks and piecing together ourselves

Design extended and page templates produced

+ underestimate how many pages there are!

+ production underway!

Week 8 - Putting It Together

Media integration starts

+ problems with rushed planning emerge
+ simplified by use of Flash for navigational elements

Database testing

+ difficulties linking into remote server
+ content still not collated and indexed
+ lack of time for Quality Assurance

Week 9 - Rushing to the Finish Line

Flash optimisation

+ movies still running poorly

+ not enough time to test on all platforms

Final design touches

+ it all comes out in the wash!

+ client keeps making changes

+ consistency issues arise

Database populated

+ inconsistent data supplied

+ hundreds of pictures to deal with!

+ problems with Pandesic

Week 10 - Hands Off!

QA and testing

+ what testing!

+ no time left - we have to launch

+ Quality Assurance an ongoing commitment

Soft launch

+ a way of managing clients expectations
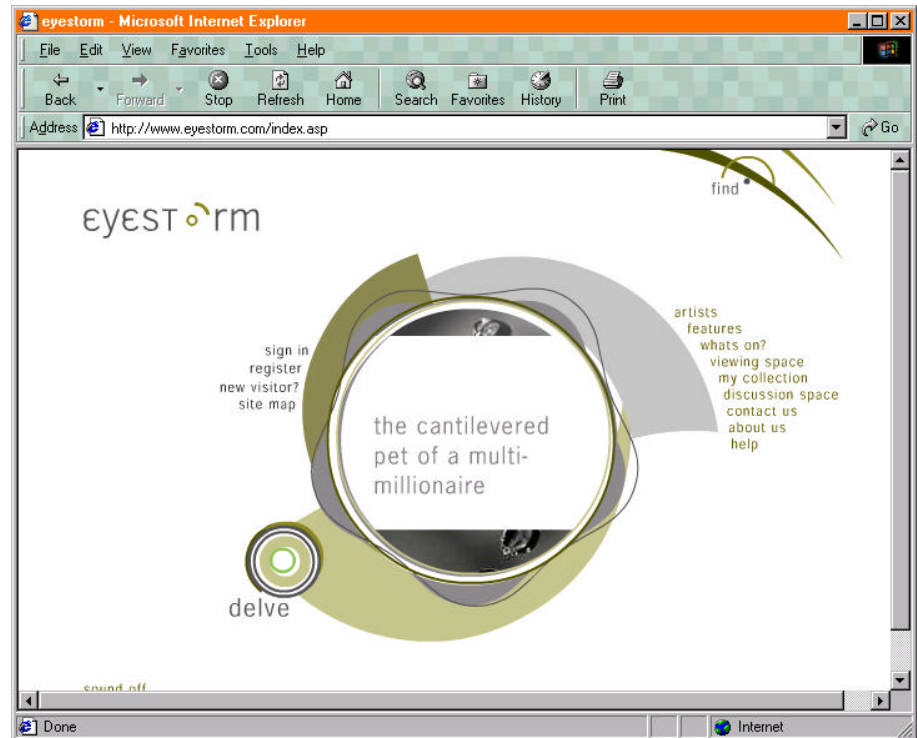
+ phasing of bug fixing

+ no press please…

What happens now?

+ client wants planning for phase 2 to start

+ a chance to fix

+ we take a breather!

The site

www.eyestorm.com

+ good reviews in the press

+ sales figures good

+ Artist community excited

+ client signs up for phase 2 - a retainer team put in place

+ advertising campaign initialised in US

Thank You